

COPY 2-1260-4

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## LANDMARK



## SURVEY

## IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 1901 East Market Street  
 Map and Parcel: 55A-149  
 Census Tract & Block: 3-101  
 Present Owner: Hallie Johnson Shisler  
 Address: 1901 East Market Street  
 Present Use: Residence, Single-family  
 Original Owner: William Hunter Meriwether  
 Original Use: Store (?)

## BASE DATA

Historic Name: Pireus Store  
 Date/Period: 1835-40  
 Style: No Identifiable Style  
 Height to Cornice:  
 Height in Stories: 1, 2  
 Present Zoning: R-2  
 Land Area (sq.ft.): 15,825  
 Assessed Value (land + imp.): 13,000

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Pireus Store is a simple vernacular structure whose appearance has been much reworked during its lifetime. The store is rectangular in form with the narrower, gable-end fronting on East Market Street. Actually two storeys in height, only one storey shows on Market Street because of the sharp ground rise. A finished attic has provided an additional half storey. The facade is two bays in width (door and a window, side hall and one room), and the store is two rooms deep. Construction is brick laid in Flemish bond on the facade (but only partially into the gable) and laid in five-course American bond elsewhere. The roof is gable (with gable-end facade) and has an obviously later central gable on the Riverside Avenue side. Along the sides, the sloped, overhanging eaves nearly obscure a corbelled-brick cornice with mouse-tooth dentils. This detail and the obviously later side gable strongly suggest that the entire roof system is a later addition. The store has two interior, gable-end chimneys of brick that, upon close inspection, appear to have been later additions to the structure. Windows are six-over-six-light, double-hung sash, with two, four-light, casement attic windows flanking each chimney in the gable. Original windows are surrounded by a heavy, three-quarter round molding. A single-storey, Victorian porch covers the Market Street facade.

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

In the year 1825, William Hunter Meriwether purchased from Isaac and Molly Miller 148 acres on the Rivanna River that was Molly's share of her father Nicholas Lewis' estate (Co. DB 25-212, DB 26-342). Meriwether was an active entrepreneur and developer and immediately began to improve the area around the confluence of the Rivanna and Moore's Creek as "Pireus" (The "port city" of Charlottesville, just as the original Piraeus was and is the port of Athens, Greece). By 1840, Meriwether had operating mill on the far (east) side of the River, had erected a toll bridge, and was constructing on the near side a flour mill, which was leased and completed as a cotton factory (Co. DB 38-363), the beginnings of the Charlottesville Woolen Mills. The Woolen Mills Store was part of this development, and was most likely built no earlier than 1835 and no later than 1840 (tradition assigns a date before 1825, but tax records dispute this). In 1844 the "store" house was sold to James R. Jones for \$1,200 (Co. DB 42-213) and then after several years of ownership by H.C. Marchant, passed to the Charlottesville Woolen Mills in 1875 (Co. DB 69-587) and was converted to a residence. See also: Co. DB 67-651, DB 93-389, DB 330-230, WB 14-552.

## SIGNIFICANCE

This house is closely associated with the development of the Charlottesville Woolen Mills, the most important industry in Charlottesville in the late 1800's. It is one of two houses remaining from the "Pireus" phase of industrial development along the Rivanna River, which began with the construction of a bridge across the Rivanna by William H. Meriwether in 1826. The store was most likely built to serve workers at the "Charlottesville Factory" a forerunner to the textile plant that eventually became the Woolen Mills. At its peak, the Woolen Mills area was a self contained community with this store, a church (nomination #21), a school and houses for the workers (nomination #56 is an example of such housing)

## CONDITIONS

Good

## SOURCES

City and County Records  
 Hallie Johnson Shisler